

2

New Jersey State Board of Education
Public Testimony
August 15, 2007
by
Carolyn S. Reynolds, CFCS

Good afternoon! I am Carolyn Reynolds; and I presently serve as the Executive Director of the New Jersey Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (NJAFCS), the Consultant to the Educators of Family and Consumer Sciences of New Jersey (EFACS-NJ) and the coordinator of the professional development program, Curriculum Connections, which is sponsored by these two family and consumer sciences (FCS) professional associations. In addition, I am one of two persons representing the national organization, Family and Consumer Sciences Education Association (FCSEA), on the National Coalition for Family and Consumer Sciences Education. This Coalition has eight (8) representatives from four (4) family and consumer sciences organizations plus an adviser which review and make recommendations concerning legislation and other FCS education issues.

Today, I wish to speak about both topics on the Public Testimony Agenda, Professional Licensure and Standards-Phase 5 Amendments and Praxis II Resolution. (I do understand that I only have a total of five (5) minutes to speak about these topics.)

We are pleased that the proposed Professional Licensure and Standards-Phase 5 Amendments include all of the recommendations in **6A:11.17 Family and Consumer Sciences** which were proposed by the two New Jersey family and consumer sciences associations. The addition of this section clarifies the eligibility requirements for the CE, CEAS or standard certificate with a comprehensive family and consumer sciences endorsement.

Family and consumer sciences is a comprehensive interdisciplinary program. *National Standards for Teachers of Family and Consumer Sciences* were developed over a two year period and were approved in 2004 under the guidance and leadership of the National Association of Teacher Educators for Family and Consumer Sciences. As a member of this professional association and the National Association of State Administrators for Family and Consumer Sciences, I have the opportunity to participate in their national conferences and dialogue with FCS teacher educators and administrators from the east coast to the west coast and from the north to the south.

Since New Jersey does not presently have a family and consumer sciences teacher education program in any of its colleges and/or universities, we must depend upon our connections within the FCS professional associations to provide information which helps in developing and conducting professional development programs and workshops addressing the needs, interests and concerns of our presently certificated New Jersey FCS educators. In addition, members of these associations share their concerns about other issues which affect our programs and future educators.

One of those concerns, which I want to address today, is the Praxis test for Family and Consumer Sciences. As I reviewed the charts which were distributed at the State Board meeting on August 1, some observations and questions immediately surfaced about the family and consumer sciences statistics. These include:

1. How many of the 52 persons taking the test were male and how many were female? (The information provided does not give us that statistic.)
2. The 05-06 pass rate shows a 94.2 percent with a 95.7 percent female pass rate. (To me [and others with whom I have spoken], this indicates that some males may have taken the test but did not pass it.)
3. How could the pass rate be so high for this interdisciplinary program? (The median score was 655 with the current qualifying score of 550. This information tells us that over half of those taking the test scored above 655.)
4. How many of the 52 persons taking the test were African American, Asian, Hispanic, Native American and white? (The statistics only give us information on the percent of African Americans and whites who passed the test.).
5. The pass rates for the other areas listed range from a low of 58.3 to a high of 91.7. (Again this brings up the question as to why the family and consumer sciences pass rate is as high as it is.)

Although these are only a few of the questions which should be addressed, it is important to consider other factors or questions such as:

1. Is the family and consumer sciences Praxis test “too elementary”? (Comments from teacher educators have indicated that this is the reality.)
2. What is the Praxis test qualifying score in other states? (Pennsylvania’s qualifying score is 600. Shouldn’t New Jersey have at least this same qualifying score?)
3. Are there other certification tests which are more appropriate for New Jersey to use? (Yes. The National Family and Consumer Sciences Certification Examination, governed by the Council for Certification, has been revised to incorporate contemporary and creative ways to assess potential candidates for certification in the critical shortage area of teaching. Texas, which has one of the most comprehensive family and consumer sciences teacher education programs in the nation, now requires that all of their teacher candidates take and pass the National Family and Consumer Sciences Certification Examination. You may learn more about this test by visiting the web site, www.aafcs.org, and click on “Certification“.)

I encourage the State Board of Education and the New Jersey Department of Education to do further study on the appropriateness of the Family and Consumer Sciences Praxis test for professional licensure.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak with you about professional licensure and standards and the Praxis test scores.